

ACCEPT 6-1

COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD

UNUSUAL RECORD



Please print or type. Attach photographs and additional pages if necessary.

Species: LAUGHING GULL
(Vernacular Name)LARUS ATRICILLA
(Scientific Name)Date(s): MAY 24, 1995Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: SEXES ALIKE Plumage: FIRST SUMMERLocality: NEENOSHE RESERVOIR Elevation: UNKNOWNNearest town: EADS County: KIOWATime(s) observed: SPECIFIC TIME NOT NOTED. APPROXIMATELY BETWEEN 2:30 TO 4:00 PDuration of observation (e.g. 1 sec., 5 min., etc.): APPROXIMATELY 15 MINS.Other observers who saw the bird with you (give names, addresses, telephone numbers):
NONEOther observers who saw the bird independently (give names, addresses, telephone numbers):
NONE KNOWN

Light conditions (position of bird to light and shade, direction and strength of light):

THE SKY WAS PARTLY CLOUDY AND THERE WAS ONLY A SLIGHT BREEZE. I WAS ON THE WEST SIDE OF THE RESERVOIR LOOKING EAST, WITH THE SUN BEHIND ME. LIGHTING CONDITIONS WERE EXCELLENT.Optical equipment used (e.g. power, types): BINOCULARS: BAUSCH & LOMB 10X40 CUSTOM. SCOPE: KOWA TSN4 WITH 20X60 LENS.Distance, and how measured: 40 TO 100 FEET, GUESSED ESTIMATE

If photographed, type of equipment and film: _____

Who else photographed the bird? _____

Describe the bird's behavior (e.g. flying, feeding, or habits used in identifying): WHILE STUDYING SOME SHOREBIRDS, MY ATTENTION WAS DIVERTED BY TWO GULLS FLYING AT FAIRLY CLOSE RANGE ALONG THE RESERVOIR SHORE, ABOUT TWENTY-FIVE TO THIRTY FEET HIGH. THE FIRST GULL WAS QUICKLY IDENTIFIED AS A RING-BILLED. THE SECOND GULL FOLLOWING BEHIND BY ABOUT THIRTY TO FORTY FEET WAS ALSO FAIRLY LARGE BUT MORE DARK COLORED ON ITS UPPERPARTS AND UNDERWING OUTER FLIGHT FEATHERS. THE RING-BILLED FLEW PASSED ME, CIRCLED, (CONT.)

Describe in detail the bird's relative size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern. Include details of bill, wing and tail shape. Give particular emphasis to marks you used to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions and illustrations is not enough. Describe only what you actually observed in the field: AS THE LAUGHING GULL WAS FLYING BY, I COULD SEE IT WAS A FAIRLY LARGE-SIZED GULL, AND BECAUSE OF ITS OVERALL DARKER COLORATION OF PARTICULAR INTEREST. WHILE THE BIRD WAS ON THE LAUNCH AREA, IT WAS EASY TO COMPARE IN SIZE TO THE RING-BILLED. I COULD SEE THEIR SIZE WERE ABOUT EQUAL. THERE WERE SOME

Description (continued): OTHER COMPARATIVE DIFFERENCES. THE LAUGHING GULL'S BILL SEEMED LONGER, AND ALTHOUGH HEAVY IN APPEARANCE NOT QUITE AS THICK AS THE RING-BILLED'S. THE LOWER MANDIBLE OF THE LAUGHING GULL HAD A DISTINCT GONYX ADDING TO A THICK TIPPED APPEARANCE. THE COLORATION WAS BLACK FROM TIP TO CAPE WITH NO VARIATION DISCERNABLE. THE HEAD SHAPE WAS ALSO DIFFERENT. THE RING-BILLED'S HEAD HAD A GENTLY SLOPING FOREHEAD AND NICELY ROUNDED CROWN. THE LAUGHING GULL SEEMED TO HAVE A LONGER FOREHEAD AND FLATTER CROWN. THE FOREHEAD WAS WHITE WITH A FEW DARK FLECKS. THIS INCREASED TO SPECKLING AND THEN TO STREAKS ON THE CROWN. ON THE NAPE THIS BECAME A MOTTLED GRAY PATCH AND CAME AROUND THE SIDES OF THE HEAD ONTO THE EAR COVERTS AND OVER TO THE EYE. THIS PATCH WAS DARKEST (CONT. P 2)

Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery, (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration): THE LAUGHING GULL GAVE TYPICAL GULL SQUAWKS WHILE FLYING IN TO LAND BESIDE THE RING-BILLED. I DID NOT HEAR THE "HA HA HA HA" TYPICALLY ASSOCIATED WITH THIS SPECIES.

Describe the general and specific habitat in which you observed the bird: THE BIRD WAS OBSERVED IN FLIGHT AND ON THE GROUND OF THE RESERVOIR SHORE.

How did you eliminate similarly appearing species? P.J. GRANT, IN HIS GULLS: A GUIDE TO IDENTIFICATION STATES THAT THE LAUGHING GULL IS SO DISTINCTIVE IN ALL PLUMMAGES THAT IT IS "UNLIKELY TO BE CONFUSED WITH ANY OTHER GULL EXCEPT FRANKLIN'S." I ELIMINATED FRANKLIN'S FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS: FIRST SUMMER PLUMAGE OF FRANKLIN'S IS VERY DIFFERENT FROM A LAUGHING GULL OF THE SAME AGE. THE SIMILARITY OF THEIR APPEARANCE OCCUR IN FIRST WINTER (CONT. P 3)

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species?
I HAD BEEN TO THE SOUTH TEXAS COAST IN FEBRUARY 1995, AND SAW HUNDREDS OF LAUGHING GULLS OF VARIOUS AGES AND PLUMMAGE.

List books, illustrations, recordings, other birders, etc. consulted and how this influenced your identification:

- a) at time of observation: ADVANCED BIRDING BY KENN KAUFMAN
NAT'L GEO FIELD GUIDE TO THE BIRDS OF N. AMERICA
- b) after observation: GULLS: A GUIDE TO IDENTIFICATION BY P.J. GRANT
SEABIRDS: AN IDENTIFICATION GUIDE BY P. HARRISON

This report was written from reports made during X, after observation _____ from memory X

Date and time report was written: FEBRUARY 25, 1996

Reporting observer: DREW SMITH Signature: Andrew D. Smith

Address: 3606 WIDGEON WAY, EAGAN MN 55123

Return to:
Bill Prather
C.F.O. Official Records Committee
13810 WCR 1
Longmont, Colorado 80504

BIRD'S BEHAVIOR, ETC. CONTINUED

AND LANDED ON THE GRAVEL AND MUD BOAT LAUNCH ABOUT 100 FEET AWAY. THE LAUGHING GULL ALSO FLEW BY ME, GIVING ME EXCELLENT LOOKS AT IT IN FLIGHT, CIRCLED A COUPLE TIMES AND CAME IN AND LANDED BY THE RING-BILLED. THE BIRDS SQUAWKED AND CALLED AT EACH OTHER AS THE LAUGHING GULL WAS LANDING. THESE ARE DESCRIBED LATER IN THIS REPORT. THE BIRDS DID NOT EXHIBIT ANY DISTINCTIVE BEHAVIOR. THEY DID WALK AROUND THE LAUNCH AREA AND OCCASIONALLY PECKED AT A FEW UNIDENTIFIED OBJECTS ON THE GROUND. AT THIS TIME I WAS ABLE TO MOVE CLOSER AND STUDY THEM THROUGH MY SCOPE. THEY REMAINED HERE UNTIL FRIGHTENED AWAY BY A FISHERMAN PULLING IN TO LAUNCH HIS BOAT.

BIRD'S DESCRIPTION, CONT.

IMMEDIATELY AROUND THE EYE. THERE WAS A BLACK CRESCENT IN FRONT OF THE EYE AND A WHITE CRESCENT ABOVE AND BELOW IT. THE EYE WAS BLACK WITH NO DISCERNABLE IRIS. THERE WAS ADDITIONAL FLECKS AND SPECKLING ON THE FACE AND SIDES OF THE THROAT. THE BELLY AND FLANKS WERE WHITE. THE LEGS AND FEET WERE ALL BLACK, AND SEEMED LONG AND GANGLY IN COMPARISON TO THE RING-BILLED. THE HIND NECK WAS LIGHTER THAN THE NAPE PATCH AND MANTLE. THE SOOTY GRAY OF THE MANTLE AND SCAPULARS WAS DISTINCTLY DARKER THAN THESE SAME AREAS ON THE RING-BILLED. THE LAUGHING GULL'S WINGS WERE LONG AND POINTED, PERHAPS ACCENTUATED BY THE ALL BLACK PRIMARIES. THIS COLORATION WAS VISIBLE ON BOTH UPPER AND UNDERWING SIDES. THE SECONDARIES HAD A DARK BAND OR BAR EXTEND ACROSS THE

BIRD'S DESCRIPTION, CONT.

LENGTH OF THE WING TO THE PRIMARIES, WITH A WHITE TRAILING EDGE. THE MIDWING AREA WAS A SOOTY GRAY, MATCHING THE COLOR OF THE SCAPULARS AND MANTLE. THE LESSER AND MEDIA COVERTS WERE A LIGHT GRAY-BROWN GROUND WITH DARK BROWN SPOTTING OR MOTTLING. THESE DETAILS WERE CLEARLY VISIBLE WHILE THE BIRD WAS IN FLIGHT. THE RUMP WAS WHITE, CONTRASTING WITH THE PALE GRAY TAIL. THE TAIL ALSO HAD A COMPLETE WIDE DARK TERMINAL BAND.

ELIMINATE SIMILAR APPEARING SPECIES, CONT.

PLUMAGE. THIS PLUMAGE IS HELD ON FRANKLIN'S BETWEEN AUGUST AND FEBRUARY, AND ON LAUGHING BETWEEN JULY AND APRIL. WHILE THIS IS APPROXIMATE, GRANT CAUTIONS, "A VERY FEW FIRST WINTERS (FRANKLIN'S GULL) DO NOT HAVE A COMPLETE MOULT TO FIRST SUMMER, INSTEAD HAVING AN ARRESTED MOULT IN WHICH ONLY A VARIABLE NUMBER OF INNER PRIMARIES ARE RENEWED AND JUVENILE OUTER PRIMARIES ARE RETAINED." EVEN WITH THAT IN MIND, THERE ARE OTHER SUBSTANTIAL DIFFERENCES BEYOND POSSIBLE ABERRANT PRIMARY COLORATION. THERE IS A DISTINCT DIFFERENCE IN SIZE. A COUPLE DAYS LATER WHILE IN GRAND JUNCTION, I WAS ABLE TO COMPARE STANDING RING-BILLED GULLS WITH COMPANION FRANKLIN'S GULLS. WITHOUT QUESTION THE RING-BILLED'S WERE NOTICEABLY LARGER, WHICH SATISFIED ME WITH MY COMPARISON OF THE LAUGHING TO THE RING-BILLED. THERE ARE OTHER JIZZ DIFFERENCES AS WELL. THE LAUGHING GULL IS LONGER LEGGED THAN FRANKLIN'S, WITH THE

(4)

ELIMINATE SIMILAR APPEARING SPECIES, CONT.

PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED GAWLY APPEARANCE. ON A FRANKLIN'S THE BILL IS NOTICEABLY SHORTER AND THINNER, ESPECIALLY WHEN COMPARING WITH RING-BILLED. OTHER FIELD MARKS MISSING ON A FIRST SUMMER FRANKLIN'S ARE THE SECONDARY BAR ON THE WING, AND THE WIDE DARK TERMINAL BAND ON THE TAIL. WHILE FRANKLIN'S DOES HAVE BOTH OF THE FIELD MARKS IN FIRST WINTER PLUMAGE, THEY ARE NOT AS EXTENSIVE AS ON A LAUGHING. THE SECONDARY BAR DOES NOT EXTEND INTO THE PRIMARIES. THE TAIL BAND DOES NOT EXTEND TO THE OUTER EDGES OF THE RETRICES. A FIRST SUMMER FRANKLIN'S GULL WOULD BE MORE LIKELY TO BE CONFUSED WITH AN ADULT LAUGHING GULL. PLEASE REFERENCE GRANT, PAGES 68-77 AND KAUFMAN, PAGES 112-113.